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The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

11 January 1985

Ms. Meg Greenfield
The Washington Post
1150 Fifteenth Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20005

To the Editor:

In a January 2 Op-Ed article, John Horton stated that he "quit the CIA" because pressure was put on him to come up with an estimate that would satisfy the Director of Central Intelligence. It is not entirely clear what Mr. Horton means by this. As National Intelligence Estimates are issued by the Director and are traditionally regarded as his estimates, it is hardly surprising that, after hearing the views of all agencies representing the Intelligence Community, the Director should want to be satisfied that the estimate is accurate and that it fully conveys what the users should know.

If Mr. Horton means that he was required to suppress or distort evidence available to the Intelligence Community, it is a very serious charge which needs to be addressed on the record. The first obligation of the Director of Central Intelligence is to produce intelligence estimates and reports that are as accurate, comprehensive and objective as possible and which appropriately reflect the diverse and often conflicting views of the various components of the Intelligence Community. Improving the estimating process was my primary concern when I assumed office in 1981. Procedures were instituted to encourage a broad range of views. The chiefs of every component of the American Intelligence Community are responsible for putting forward at meetings of the National Foreign Intelligence Board the information and judgments developed in his organization. These procedures were carefully followed in the estimate addressed in Mr. Horton's article.

Concern over developments had led to the initiation of a new estimate of the prospects for serious instability in a particular country. This issue was controversial within the Intelligence Community. There were disagreements between the drafting analyst and Mr. Horton over deletions made by the latter and I insisted that at least some of the information and challenges to conventional wisdom present in the analyst's original draft be restored to the estimate so that the range of views existing in the Intelligence Community would be available to policymakers. The full range of the judgments that came out of the process were clearly and prominently stated on the first page of the estimate.

Finally, I would bring to your attention that the House of Representatives Committee on Intelligence reviewed this matter and stated in its annual report just issued this week that: "The Committee examined the earlier drafts and the final version of that particular NIE and found that dissenting views were printed at the very beginning of the study, a practice the Committee applauds."

Sincerely,

William J. Casey

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